




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 24 October 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Biloela, Health Services

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (7.25 pm): Today I was proud to table on behalf of my community a petition to save the Biloela maternity ward. That petition contained 3,936 signatures. That is nearly 4,000 people who want the Biloela maternity ward returned. That is a marvellous feat given there are only about 5,500 people who live in that community directly. People from Biloela and surrounds certainly fell in behind to support the petition to save the Biloela maternity ward because they want local health services in their community. They do not want to have to travel down a highway and risk giving birth on the side of the road; they want access to what is a basic health service.

We here in the LNP opposition understand the importance of local health services. I am certainly fighting for more local health services in Callide every single day that I am representing my community as the member for Callide. It is an absolute priority of the LNP that every Queenslanders has easier access to health services. Every Queenslanders deserves access to health services, no matter where they live. That is something that we here in the LNP have been saying for a very long time. I note the health minister this morning was trying to claim it was a statement that the Labor Party came up with, but we know that here in the LNP we have been talking about it for a very long time. Previously in government we delivered it. We know that this Labor government has been cutting our services, and there are fewer services in my community than there used to be. That is a matter of fact.

We know that talking about services and making announcements is not delivering them. We need services delivered. We do not need announcements of things that never come. We need physical services delivered. The health minister talks about safety and that decisions are made in the interest of safety, but giving birth on the side of a highway is not safe.

I also want to touch on a question I asked of the Minister for Health. I asked her whether the surgical theatre at the Biloela Hospital is compliant with all standards—a pretty simple question. You would think a yes or no answer could be provided by the health minister. I followed on with a few questions to the government as to what their plans are if it is not compliant. Rather than saying, 'Yes, it is compliant with all standards,' she could not answer the question. This suggests that she is hiding the truth from the community of Biloela. I asked: if she cannot say that it is compliant with all standards, how long have they known about it? What are they hiding from the community of Biloela? I note that they have announced a new Biloela hospital in response, which is fantastic—I welcome investment—but in the same statement she talked about an upgraded hospital. Are we getting a new hospital or are we getting an upgraded one? The health minister needs to be honest with Queenslanders, and I will keep fighting for more services in our communities. A CT scanner should be part of that hospital, as well as a helipad and many other services.